



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY SETTLES CIVIL RIGHTS LAWSUIT
AGAINST GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that the United States has filed, and simultaneously settled, a federal civil rights lawsuit alleging that the owners and operators of the GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL, a historic, luxury hotel in Manhattan, discriminated against persons with disabilities and repeatedly violated the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). As part of the settlement, the hotel owner, GPH MANAGEMENT, LLC, and operator, RFR HOTEL GROUP, LLC, agreed to remove barriers that impeded the accessibility of the hotel, to change hotel policies to benefit persons with disabilities, and to pay penalties. The settlement agreement, in the form of a consent decree, was approved late yesterday by U.S. District Judge ROBERT W. SWEET.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "New York City hosts millions of visitors each year, and it is essential that our hotels are open and accessible to all. This agreement helps ensure that individuals with disabilities will have the same access to hotel accommodations that are enjoyed by others."

According to the Complaint filed September 7, 2011, in Manhattan federal court:

The GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL, located at 2 Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, repeatedly violated the ADA and discriminated against persons with disabilities by refusing to accommodate the needs of a guest with a hearing impairment, failing to remove barriers to access, and renovating the hotel in violation of the ADA.

On two separate occasions, a hotel guest, who described himself as "profoundly deaf," was denied communications devices that the hotel was required to maintain under federal law. The Complaint also alleges that the hotel contains numerous barriers to access, including the design and layout of the entrances, interiors, and bathrooms of the guest rooms the Hotel itself

and lobby, the Hotel's spa, and the Hotel's roof club and

In addition, the best rooms in the hotel, including the penthouse and Gramercy Suites, are inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

According to the Complaint, the owners and operators of the GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL represented to the United States that a planned renovation of the hotel would address any ADA violations. However, the renovation failed to correct ADA violations at the hotel and created additional barriers to access.

In the consent decree, the owner and operator of the hotel agreed to, among other things:

- Retrofit luxury suites to ensure that guests with disabilities can rent and access the best rooms in the hotel, including by providing access to the penthouse;
- Maintain sufficient equipment for the benefit of hard of hearing and visually impaired guests; and
- Retrofit the lobby, entrance, ADA designated guest rooms, hotel facilities, roof, and gardens to comply with the ADA.

As part of the consent decree, the GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL agreed to adopt policies accommodating guests with disabilities, pay \$10,000 to compensate a victim of the alleged discrimination, and pay a \$20,000 civil penalty to the Government.

The case is being handled by the Office's Civil Rights Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney DAVID J. KENNEDY is in charge of the case.

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